

# **Treatment Integrity**

The term “treatment integrity” refers to the degree to which interventions are implemented as planned. Much preparation goes into the identification of appropriate intervention services. However, it is also essential that safeguards be put into place to determine if those interventions are being carried out as they were intended. A student’s responsiveness to an intervention may eventually be used in eligibility decision-making. Therefore, school personnel must be confident that the intervention was performed with high levels of integrity. When treatment integrity data are not collected, it is difficult to identify reasons a child does not respond to an intervention. In that situation, it could be hypothesized that the intervention was not implemented as planned. By collecting these data, that hypothesis can be eliminated and others considered.

To monitor integrity, the specific intervention components or steps must be operationally defined in a way that provides structure to the intervention session. One way to provide this structure is to develop an intervention script, which lists each intervention step that will be used during each session. The interventionist can use this script. Through the use of this script, it is then possible to identify the intervention steps performed.

It is important for the intervention script to be monitored regularly. Research has shown that integrity of interventions tends to decrease over time as the interventionist begins to deviate from the intervention plan. In addition, intervention effectiveness could change due to components that are modified or deleted.

Several factors have been found to be related to levels of treatment integrity, such as the complexity of the treatment, the time required to implement the treatment, available resources, and the perceived effectiveness of the treatment. If integrity levels are found to be low, it is important to use effective problem solving strategies to determine the reason for the low integrity. In many cases, retraining will be required. In addition, the intervention may require modification or location of additional supports may be necessary.